IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Appellants:	Robert A. BOTHAM et al.	§	Confirmation No.:	6075
Serial No.:	09/997,340	§	Group Art Unit:	3623
Filed:	11/29/2001	§	Examiner:	David Robertson
For:	Method For Receiving And Reconciling Physical Inventory Data Against An Asset Management System From A Remote Location	§	Docket No.:	200302166-1

APPEAL BRIEF

Mail Stop Appeal Brief – Patents
Commissioner for Patents
PO Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Date: December 19, 2007

Sir:

Appellants hereby submit this Appeal Brief in connection with the above-identified application. A Notice of Appeal is being filed concurrently herewith.

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I. REAL PARTY IN INTEREST

The real party in interest is the Hewlett-Packard Development Company (HPDC), a Texas Limited Partnership, having its principal place of business in Houston, Texas, through its merger with Compaq Computer Corporation (CCC) which owned Compaq Information Technologies Group, L.P. (CITG). The Change of Name document from CITG to HPDC was recorded on May 12, 2004, at Reel/Frame 014628/0103.

II. RELATED APPEALS AND INTERFERENCES

Appellants are unaware of any related appeals or interferences.

III. STATUS OF THE CLAIMS

Originally filed claims:	1-39.
Claim cancellations:	24, 28, 33 and 36.
Added claims:	None.
Presently pending claims:	1-23, 25-27, 29-32, 34, 35 and 37-39.
Presently appealed claims:	1-23, 25-27, 29-32, 34, 35 and 37-39.

IV. STATUS OF THE AMENDMENTS

No claims were amended after the final Office action dated September 19, 2007.

V. SUMMARY OF THE CLAIMED SUBJECT MATTER

The Specification is directed to a method of receiving and reconciling physical inventory data against an asset management database.[1] Some of the illustrative embodiments are methods as in claim 1:

> 1. A method of reconciling physical inventory against an asset management database, the method comprising:
>
> taking a physical inventory;[2]
>
> creating raw inventory data;[3]
>
> transferring the raw inventory data to a web server;[4]
>
> converting the raw inventory data into an intermediate database;[5]
>
> creating a copy of the asset management database;[6]
>
> reconciling records in the intermediate database against corresponding records in the copy of the asset management database by way of a web browser;[7] and
>
> updating the asset management database with records accepted during the reconciling step.[8]

Other illustrative embodiments are methods as in claim 18:

> 18. A method of taking a physical inventory and reconciling the physical inventory against an asset management database, the method comprising:
>
> scanning with a hand held scanner bar codes identifying locations and bar codes identifying assets to create inventory data;[9]
>
> transferring the inventory data from the hand held scanner to a web server;[10]

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[1] (Specification Title).

[2] (Specification, Page 2, Paragraph [0007], lines 9-10). Hereinafter, each cite to the specification has the format ([page], [paragraph(s)], [lines numbers within the paragraph(s)]) as a shorthand notation. This illustrative citation in the shorthand form reads (2, [0007], lines 9-10). *See also*, Figure 4, element 84.

[3] (6, [0018], line 1) – (7, [0020], line 6), Figure 1.

[4] (7, [0020], lines 3-6), Figure 1, element 18; (7, [0021], lines 1-8), Figure 3, element 42.

[5] (8, [0024], lines 2-4), Figure 3, elements 46 and 48.

[6] (9, [0026], lines 1-2), Figure 2, element 24.

[7] (10, [0027], lines 1-3), Figure 2, element 26.

[8] (11, [0030], lines 1-2), Figure 2, element 28.

[9] (6, [0018], lines 12-16).

[10] (7, [0020], lines 3-6), Figure 1, element 18; (7, [0021], lines 1-8), Figure 3, element 42.

converting the inventory data into an intermediate database;[11]
making a copy of the asset management database available on the web server;[12]
reconciling records in the intermediate database against corresponding records in the copy of the asset management database on the web server by way of a web browser;[13] and
updating the asset management database with records accepted during the reconciling step.[14]

Yet still other illustrative embodiments are methods as in claim 29 (which depend from claim 18):

> 29. The method as defined in claim 18 further comprising, before the step of making a copy of the asset management database, placing an identifying indicia on a portion of each record in the asset management database.[15]

Other illustrative embodiments are methods as in claim 30 (which depends from claims 18 and 29):

> 30. The method as defined in claim 29 wherein updating the asset management database with records accepted during the reconciling step further comprises writing the updated records without the identifying indicia.[16]

Yet still other illustrative embodiments are methods as in claim 34:

> 34. A method of reconciling a physical inventory of assets against an asset management database and identifying assets not located in the physical inventory, the method comprising:
> placing identifying indicia on each location code in the asset management database;[17]
> taking the physical inventory using a portable bar code scanning device that saves physical inventory data in a

[11] (8, [0024], lines 2-4), Figure 3, elements 46 and 48.

[12] (9, [0026], lines 1-8), Figure 2, element 24.

[13] (10, [0027], lines 1-3), Figure 2, element 26.

[14] 11, [0030], lines 1-2), Figure 2, element 28.

[15] (13, [0034], lines 1-2), Figure 3, element 62.

[16] (13, [0034], lines 3-5).

[17] (13, [0034], lines 1-2), Figure 3, element 62.

data file within the portable bar code scanning device;[18]

transferring the data file to a web server;[19]

transforming the data file into an intermediate database;[20]

reconciling records of the intermediate database against corresponding records in the asset management database;[21]

writing location codes, associated with assets, to the asset management database without the identifying indicia;[22] and

identifying assets not found during the physical inventory in the asset management database by identifying location codes having the identifying indicia.[23]

[18] (2, [0007], lines 9-10), Figure 4, element 84; (6, [0018], lines 12-16).

[19] (7, [0020], lines 3-6), Figure 1, element 18; (7, [0021], lines 1-8), Figure 3, element 42.

[20] (8, [0024], lines 2-4), Figure 3, elements 46 and 48..

[21] (10, [0027], lines 1-3), Figure 2, element 26.

[22] (13, [0034], lines 3-5).

[23] (13, [0034], lines 5-11).

VI. GROUNDS OF REJECTION TO BE REVIEWED ON APPEAL

Whether claims 1-23 and 25-27 are unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Christensen (U.S. Pat. No. 6,662,193) in view of xAM Asset Management Software Overview (hereinafter "xAssets").

Whether claims 29-32, 34-35 and 37-39 are unpatentable under 34 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Christensen, xAssets and "Bar Coding Fixed Asset Inventories" (hereinafter "Eckman").

VII. ARGUMENT

A. Section 103 Rejections over Christensen and xAssets

1. Claims 1-23 and 25-27

Claims 1-23 and 25-27 stand rejected as allegedly obvious over Christenson and xAssets. Claim 1 is representative of this group of claims. This grouping is for purposes of this appeal only, and should not be construed to mean the patentability of any of the claims may be determined, in later actions before a court, based on the grouping. Rather, the presumption of 35 U.S.C. § 282 shall apply to each claim individually.

Christensen is directed to methods and systems for manipulating a database through portable data entry devices.[24] Christensen's Figure 3, reproduced immediately below, is illustrative of the Christensen system.

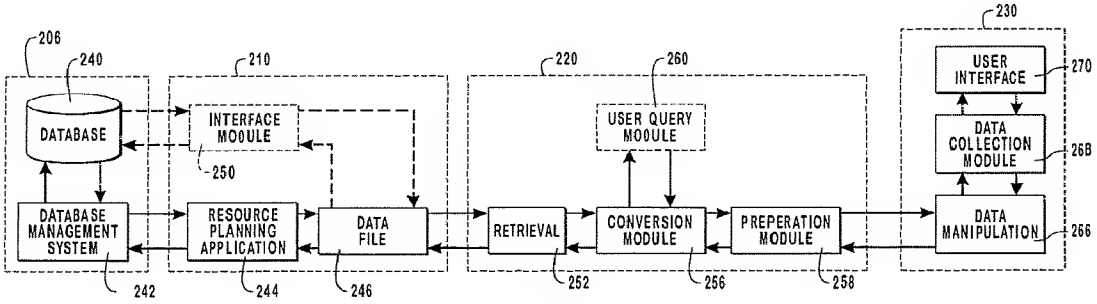

FIG. 3

In the Christensen system, portions of the data from a main database 240 (left side of FIG 3 above) are transferred into a portable data entry device 230 (right side of FIG 3 above) through a data control module 210 and a data manipulation module 220.

> FIG. 4 depicts the processes and methodology for transferring data maintained in the storage module 210 to PDA module 230 through data manipulation module 220.[25]

After a portion of the data is transferred from the database 240 to the PDA 230, updating of the data takes place **as the data exists in the PDA 230.**

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[24] Christensen's Title.

[25] Christensen Col. 10, lines 25-27.

> Data prepared by preparation module 258 is delivered to and from PDA module 230. ...
>
> Data received by data manipulation module 266 [of the PDA 230] **is maintained within the data collection module 268** [of the PDA 230]. Data collection module 268 functions to both store the required data for inventory updating, while storing any updated information that a user may input through user interface 270.[26]
>
> ...
>
> [U]pdating of the data may be performed, and more specifically updating of the inventory information such as but not limited to new item numbers, quantities "on hand," quantities required, and such other information as required by those seeking inventory information, as depicted by block 302.[27]

After updating, updated data is returned to be reconciled directly against data within database 240.

> FIG. 5 represents the flow of updated data, beginning with data in a PDA data structure that passes through manipulation module 220 to be transmitted to storage module 210.[28]
>
> Once updating is complete ... the data is prepared, such as compressed as encrypted in preparation for and transmittal to the manipulation module 220 ... . Manipulation module 220, upon receiving the data in PDA data structure form, converts the data into database data structure form ... . **Upon conversion of the data, a reconciliation of the updated data with data contained within database 240 occurs** ... .[29]

It is not until after the data from the PDA is reconciled directly against the database 240 that the reconciled data is transferred to data file 246, and then written to the database 240.

> Once all necessary or specified reconciliation activities are performed the updated data is prepared and delivered to data file 246. ...
>
> The data contained within data file 246 is retrieved by, alternatively, portions of enterprise resource planning application 244

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[26] Christensen Col. 9, lines 31-52 (emphasis added).

[27] Christensen Col. 11, line 65 – Col. 12, line 5.

[28] Christensen Col. 10, lines 27-30.

[29] Christensen Col. 12, lines 6-13 (emphasis added).

> and/or database management system 242, such that the associated database engine may store and update database 240... .[30]

xAssets is relied upon only for teachings of asset management software which provides access to a database by way of the Internet.

Illustrative claim 1, by contrast, specifically recites, "taking a physical inventory creating raw inventory data; transferring the raw inventory data to a web server; converting the raw inventory data into an intermediate database; creating a copy of the asset management database; reconciling records in the intermediate database against corresponding records in the copy of the asset management database by way of a web browser; and updating the asset management database with records accepted during the reconciling step." Appellants respectfully submit that Christensen and XAssets fail to teach or suggest such a method. In particular, Christensen expressly teaches that the updated data from the PDA 230 is reconciled directly against the main database 240. Only after the direct reconciliation against the main database is the data placed back in database 240 (through data file 246). Thus, even if hypothetically the teachings of xAssets are exactly as the Office action suggests (which Appellants do not admit), Christensen and xAssets still fail to teach "creating **a copy** of the asset management database; reconciling records in the intermediate database against corresponding records in **the copy** of the asset management database." For these reasons alone the rejection should be overturned and the claims set for issue.

With regard to a teaching of the copy of the asset management database, in a first location the Office action relies on the data file 246 of the control module 210.[31] Appellants respectfully traverse. Christensen expressly teaches that updated data from the PDA is reconciled directly against the database 240, not against data in the data file 246. In fact, once the data is reconciled the data is placed in the data file 246 as the trigger to be written to the database 240.

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[30] Christensen Col. 12, lines 23-36.

[31] Office action dated September 19, 2007, page 3, last paragraph ("creating a copy of the asset management database (Figure 3, the Data file of the Data Control Module of Figure 3)").

Thus, even if hypothetically the data file 246 is the claimed "copy of the asset management database," Christensen and xAssets fail to teach "reconciling records in the intermediate database against corresponding records in the **copy** of the asset management database" because Christensen reconciles directly against database 240. For these additional reasons the rejection should be overturned and the claims set for issue.

In a second location, the Office action relies on an optional database held in the manipulation module 220 as the claimed copy of the asset management database.[32] Again, Appellants respectfully traverse. At the cited location, Christensen states:

> [I]n another embodiment of the present invention, conversion module 256 and/or manipulation module 220 may incorporate a database (not shown) and database management system (not shown) that stores the data transceived between storage module 210 and PDA module 230. As such, the integrated database maintains a list of fields, records, and/or files representative of the data requested and updated during use of PDA module 230 and system 200. The data held with the optional database may have a similar structure as that of database 240, however one skilled in the art may appreciate that the optional database may have a differing hardware and/or software configuration with an alternate data structure.[33]

Thus, the contents of the optional database are data transceived between storage module 210 and PDA module 230. In other words, the data in the optional database is a combination of both data from the database 240 and the data from the PDA 230. The position of the Office action that two databases exist in the manipulation module 220 in reference to the optional database does not follow from the teachings of Christensen. For these additional reasons the rejection should be overturned and the claims set for issue

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[32] Office action dated September 19, 2007, page 5, last paragraph ("Thus, within the Manipulation Module (220), there appears a database containing records from the main asset database *and* records from the converted raw inventory data from the PDA" (emphasis original)).

[33] Christensen's Col. 8, line 66 through Col. 9, line11.

Further with reference to the assertions of the Office action on page 5, even if hypothetically there are two separate databases in the manipulation module 220 (which Appellants do not admit), the existence of the two separate databases in the manipulation module 220 does not obviate the fact that Christensen expressly teaches reconciliation against main asset database 240. Thus, even if hypothetically the optional database is considered to be the "copy of the asset management database" (which Appellants do not admit), Christensen and xAssets still fail to teach "reconciling records in the intermediate database against corresponding records in the **copy** of the asset management database." For these additional reasons, the rejections should be overturned and the claims set for issue.

Based on the foregoing, Appellants respectfully submit that the rejections of the claims in this first grouping be reversed, and the claims set for issue.

B. Section 103 Rejections over Christensen, xAssets and Eckman

1. Claims 34-35 and 37-39

Claims 34-35 and 37-39 stand rejected as allegedly obvious over Christenson, xAssets and Eckman. Claim 34 is representative of this group of claims. This grouping is for purposes of this appeal only, and should not be construed to mean the patentability of any of the claims may be determined, in later actions before a court, based on the grouping. Rather, the presumption of 35 U.S.C. § 282 shall apply to each claim individually.

Eckman is an article directed to bar coding for fixed asset inventories.[34] In a section titled "Determine Reconciliation Approach"[35], Eckman discusses that a subledger of fixed asset records is transferred to each bar code reader.[36] As each asset is counted with a particular bar code reader, the corresponding fixed asset record in the subledger of the bar code reader is flagged.[37]

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[34] Eckman Title.

[35] Eckman Page 60, left column.

[36] *Id.*

[37] *Id.*

> When the physical inventory is complete, bar code readers are "dumped" into one file, and reconciliation reports are run. By the time the physical inventory is complete, the first pass of the reconciliation is finished, leaving only the exceptions to resolve.[38]

Thus, the "flags" of Eckman are placed in the subledgers of the bar code readers, not Eckman's main asset database. Moreover, when all the various subledgers are "dumped" into one file, exceptions are identified by entries without the flag.

Representative claim 34, by contrast, specifically recites, "placing identifying indicia on each location code in the asset management database; taking the physical inventory ... reconciling records of the intermediate database against corresponding records in the asset management database; writing location codes, associated with assets, to the asset management database without the identifying indicia; and identifying assets not found during the physical inventory in the asset management database by identifying location codes having the identifying indicia." Appellants respectfully submit that the cited art fails to teach or suggest such a method. In particular, Eckman expressly teaches that a fixed asset record is flagged only when the asset is found. By contrast, representative claim 34 requires "placing identifying indicia on each location code." Eckman expressly teaches that the flag is placed on the record in the subledger contained within the bar code reader. By contrast, representative claim 34 requires, "placing identifying indicia ... in the asset management database." In Eckman, "exceptions" are noted by the lack of a flag on a record. By contrast, representative claim 34 requires "identifying assets not found during the physical inventory in the asset management database by identifying location codes having the identifying indicia." Eckman's system is thus precisely opposite that of the claimed method. Therefore, even if hypothetically the teachings of Christensen and xAssets are precisely as the Office action suggests (which Appellants do not admit), the cited references still fail to teach "placing identifying indicia on **each** location code **in the asset management database**; ... **reconciling** records of the intermediate database **against corresponding**

[38] *Id.*

records in the asset management database; ... **identifying** assets not found during the physical inventory **in the asset management database** by identifying location codes having the identifying indicia."

Based on the foregoing, Appellants respectfully submit that the rejections of the claims in this grouping be reversed, and the claims set for issue.

2. Claims 29

Claims 29 stands rejected as allegedly obvious over Christenson, xAssets and Eckman.

Christensen is directed to methods and systems for manipulating a database through portable data entry devices.[39] In the Christensen system, portions of the data from a main database 240 are transferred into a portable data entry device 230 through a data control module 210 and a data manipulation module 220.[40] After a portion of the data is transferred from the database 240 to the PDA 230, updating of the data takes place **as the data exists in the PDA 230**.[41] After updating, updated data is returned to be reconciled directly against data within database 240.[42] It is not until after the data from the PDA is reconciled directly against the database 240 that the reconciled data is transferred to data file 246, and then written to the database 240. [43] xAssets is relied upon only for teachings of asset management software which provides access to a database by way of the Internet.

Eckman is an article directed to bar coding for fixed asset inventories.[44] In a section titled "Determine Reconciliation Approach"[45], Eckman discusses that a subledger of fixed assets records is transferred to each bar code reader.[46] As

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[39] Christensen's Title.

[40] Christensen Col. 10, lines 25-27.

[41] Christensen Col. 9, lines 31-52; Col. 11, line 65 – Col. 12, line 5.

[42] Christensen Col. 10, lines 27-30; Col. 12, lines 6-13.

[43] Christensen Col. 12, lines 23-36.

[44] Eckman Title.

[45] Eckman Page 60, left column.

[46] *Id.*

each asset is counted with a particular bar code reader, the corresponding fixed asset record in the subledger of the bar code reader is flagged.[47]

> When the physical inventory is complete, bar code readers are "dumped" into one file, and reconciliation reports are run. By the time the physical inventory is complete, the first pass of the reconciliation is finished, leaving only the exceptions to resolve.[48]

Thus, the "flags" of Eckman are placed in the subledgers of the bar code readers, not Eckman's main asset database. Moreover, when all the various subledgers are "dumped" into one file, exceptions are identified by entries without the flag.

Claim 29, by contrast, by virtue of its dependency from claim 18 specifically recites, "scanning with a hand held scanner bar codes identifying locations and bar codes identifying assets to create inventory data; transferring the inventory data from the hand held scanner to a web server; converting the inventory data into an intermediate database; making a copy of the asset management database available on the web server; reconciling records in the intermediate database against corresponding records in the copy of the asset management database on the web server by way of a web browser; and updating the asset management database with records accepted during the reconciling step." Appellants respectfully submit that Christensen, XAssets and Eckman fail to teach or suggest such a method. In particular, Christensen expressly teaches that the updated data from the PDA 230 is reconciled directly against the main database 240. Only after the direct reconciliation against the main database is the data placed back in database 240 (through data file 246). Thus, even if hypothetically the teachings of xAssets and Eckman are precisely as the Office action suggests (which Appellants do not admit), Christensen and xAssets still fail to teach "making a **copy** of the asset management database available on the web server; reconciling records in the intermediate database against corresponding records in **the copy** of the asset management database." For

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[47] *Id.*

[48] *Id.*

these reasons alone the rejection should be overturned and the claims set for issue.

Further, claim 29 recites, "before the step of making a copy of the asset management database, placing an identifying indicia on a portion of each record in the asset management database." Eckman expressly teaches that a fixed asset record is flagged only when the asset is found, and flag is in the subledger in the bar code reader. Thus, Christensen, xAssts and Eckman fail to teach or suggest "placing an identifying indicia on a portion of **each** record **in the asset management database.**"

Based on the foregoing, Appellants respectfully submit that the rejections of the claims in this grouping be reversed, and the claims set for issue.

3. Claim 30-32

Claims 30-32 stand rejected as allegedly obvious over Christenson, xAssets and Eckman. Claim 30 is representative of this group of claims. This grouping is for purposes of this appeal only, and should not be construed to mean the patentability of any of the claims may be determined, in later actions before a court, based on the grouping. Rather, the presumption of 35 U.S.C. § 282 shall apply to each claim individually.

Claim 30, by virtue of its dependency from claim 18, specifically recites, "scanning with a hand held scanner bar codes identifying locations and bar codes identifying assets to create inventory data; transferring the inventory data from the hand held scanner to a web server; converting the inventory data into an intermediate database; making a copy of the asset management database available on the web server; reconciling records in the intermediate database against corresponding records in the copy of the asset management database on the web server by way of a web browser; and updating the asset management database with records accepted during the reconciling step." Appellants respectfully submit that Christensen, XAssets and Eckman fail to teach or suggest such a method. In particular, Christensen expressly teaches that the updated data from the PDA 230 is reconciled directly against the main database 240. Only after the direct reconciliation against the main database is

the data placed back in database 240 (through data file 246). Thus, even if hypothetically the teachings of xAssets and Eckman are precisely as the Office action suggests (which Appellants do not admit), Christensen and xAssets still fail to teach "making a **copy** of the asset management database available on the web server; reconciling records in the intermediate database against corresponding records in **the copy** of the asset management database." For these reasons alone the rejection should be overturned and the claims set for issue.

Further, claim 30 recites "wherein updating the asset management database with records accepted during the reconciling step further comprises writing the updated records without the identifying indicia." Eckman expressly teaches that the flag is placed on the record when the asset is found and that "exceptions" are noted by the lack of a flag on a record. Writing updated records without the flag would renders Eckman incapable of identifying exceptions, thus not only changing the principle of operation, but also rendering Eckman unsatisfactory for its intended purpose.[49] Thus, Christensen, xAssts and Eckman fail to teach or suggest "wherein updating the asset management database with records accepted during the reconciling step further comprises writing the updated records without the identifying indicia."

Based on the foregoing, Appellants respectfully submit that the rejections of the claims in this grouping be reversed, and the claims set for issue.

C. Conclusion

For the reasons stated above, Appellants respectfully submit that the Examiner erred in rejecting all pending claims. It is believed that no extensions of time or fees are required, beyond those that may otherwise be provided for in documents accompanying this paper. However, in the event that additional extensions of time are necessary to allow consideration of this paper, such extensions are hereby petitioned under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136(a), and any fees required (including fees for net addition of claims) are hereby authorized to be

charged to Hewlett-Packard Development Company's Deposit Account No. 08-2025.

Respectfully submitted,

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[49] Manual of Patent Examining Procedures (MPEP), 8th Ed., Rev. 3, August 2005, Section 2143.01(V) and (VI), pp. 2100-137 to 2100-138.

VIII. CLAIMS APPENDIX

1. (Original) A method of reconciling physical inventory against an asset management database, the method comprising:

taking a physical inventory;

creating raw inventory data;

transferring the raw inventory data to a web server;

converting the raw inventory data into an intermediate database;

creating a copy of the asset management database;

reconciling records in the intermediate database against corresponding records in the copy of the asset management database by way of a web browser; and

updating the asset management database with records accepted during the reconciling step.

2. (Previously presented) The method as defined in claim 1 wherein taking physical inventory and creating raw inventory data further comprises, with a hand held bar code scanning device:

scanning a location code;

scanning assets codes associated with that location code;

repeating the scanning step at a plurality of locations and for a plurality of assets codes;

storing the location codes and the asset codes in the hand held bar code scanning device.

3. (Previously presented) The method as defined in claim 2 wherein storing the location codes and the asset codes in the hand held bar code scanning device further comprises storing the location codes and the asset codes in a file in the hand held bar code scanner.

4. (Previously presented) The method as defined in claim 3 wherein storing the location codes and asset codes in a file further comprises storing the location codes and asset codes in a comma delimited ASCII text file.

5. (Previously presented) The method as defined in claim 3 wherein transferring the raw inventory data to a web server further comprises copying the file to a web server using a file transfer protocol (FTP) program.

6. (Previously presented) The method as defined in claim 3 wherein transferring the raw inventory data to a web server further comprises;

moving the file to an intermediate device; and then

copying the file from the intermediate device to the web server.

7. (Previously presented) The method as defined in claim 6 wherein moving the file to an intermediate device further comprises broadcasting the file using electromagnetic waves.

8. (Previously presented) The method as defined in claim 6 wherein moving the file to an intermediate device further comprises:

copying the file to a storage device; and then

copying the file from the storage device to the intermediate device.

9. (Previously presented) The method as defined in claim 8 wherein copying the file to a storage device further comprises copying the file to a floppy disk.

10. (Previously presented) The method as defined in claim 6 wherein moving the file to an intermediate device further comprises moving the file to a computer system having an internet connection.

11. (Previously presented) The method of as defined in claim 1 wherein converting the raw inventory data into an intermediate database further comprises

converting the raw inventory data into the intermediate database being a structured query language (SQL) format database having fields for location codes and associated asset codes.

12. (Previously presented) The method as defined in claim 11 further comprising creating additional fields associated with each asset code to identify a person who performs the reconciliation step.

13. (Previously presented) The method as defined in claim 1 wherein reconciling records in the intermediate database against corresponding records in the copy of the asset management database by way of a web browser further comprises:

invoking a web browser program;

entering a user identification;

entering a password;

displaying corresponding records between the intermediate database and the copy of the asset management database;

reconciling the corresponding records creating reconciled records; and

marking at least some of the reconciled records as accepted.

14. (Previously presented) The method as defined in claim 13 wherein invoking a web browser program further comprises invoking an Internet Explorer® web browser.

15. (Previously presented) The method as defined in claim 13 wherein displaying corresponding records between the intermediate database and the copy of the asset management database further comprises:

displaying a record from the intermediate database based on an asset code; and

displaying a record from the copy of the asset management database based on the asset code.

16. (Previously presented) The method as defined in claim 13 wherein updating the asset management database with records accepted during the reconciling step further comprises copying to the asset management database reconciled records marked as accepted.

17. (Previously presented) The method as defined in claim 1 wherein taking a physical inventory further comprises taking a physical inventory of computer assets.

18. (Previously presented) A method of taking a physical inventory and reconciling the physical inventory against an asset management database, the method comprising:

scanning with a hand held scanner bar codes identifying locations and bar codes identifying assets to create inventory data;

transferring the inventory data from the hand held scanner to a web server;

converting the inventory data into an intermediate database;

making a copy of the asset management database available on the web server;

reconciling records in the intermediate database against corresponding records in the copy of the asset management database on the web server by way of a web browser; and

updating the asset management database with records accepted during the reconciling step.

19. (Previously presented) The method as defined in claim 18 wherein scanning with a hand held scanner bar codes identifying locations and bar codes identifying assets further comprises:

scanning a plurality of bar codes identifying locations; and

scanning a bar code identifying at least one asset associated with each location.

20. (Previously presented) The method as defined in claim 19 wherein creating inventory data further comprises storing the bar codes identifying the locations and also storing the bar codes identifying assets in a file in the hand held scanner.

21. (Previously presented) The method as defined in claim 20 wherein transferring the inventory data from the hand held scanner to a web server further comprises transferring the file from the hand held scanner to the web server.

22. (Previously presented) The method as defined in claim 21 wherein transferring the file from the hand held scanner to the web server further comprises transferring the file using a file transfer protocol (FTP) program.

23. (Previously presented) The method as defined in claim 21 wherein transferring the file from the hand held scanner to the web server further comprises;

transferring the file from the hand held scanner to an intermediate device; and

transferring the file from the intermediate device to the web server using the FTP protocol.

24. (Cancelled).

25. (Previously presented) The method as defined in claim 23 wherein transferring the file from the hand held scanner to the intermediate device further comprises:

copying the file to a disk; and then

copying the file from the disk to the intermediate device.

26. (Previously presented) The method as defined in claim 23 wherein transferring the file from the hand held scanner to the web server further comprises;

transferring the file from the hand held scanner to a laptop computer; and

transferring the file from laptop computer to the web server using the FTP protocol.

27. (Previously presented) The method as defined in claim 18 wherein converting the inventory data into an intermediate database further comprises converting the inventory data into a structured query language (SQL) database resident on the web server.

28. (Cancelled).

29. (Previously presented) The method as defined in claim 18 further comprising, before the step of making a copy of the asset management database, placing an identifying indicia on a portion of each record in the asset management database.

30. (Previously presented) The method as defined in claim 29 wherein updating the asset management database with records accepted during the reconciling step further comprises writing the updated records without the identifying indicia.

31. (Previously presented) The method as defined in claim 30 further comprising, after reconciling is complete:

searching the asset management database for records having the identifying indicia; and thereby

identifying assets that were not found during the physical inventory.

32. (Previously presented) The method as defined in claim 29 wherein placing an identifying indicia on a portion of each record in the asset management database further comprises appending a code to the end of each seat code.

33. (Cancelled).

34. (Previously presented) A method of reconciling a physical inventory of assets against an asset management database and identifying assets not located in the physical inventory, the method comprising:

placing identifying indicia on each location code in the asset management database;

taking the physical inventory using a portable bar code scanning device that saves physical inventory data in a data file within the portable bar code scanning device;

transferring the data file to a web server;

transforming the data file into an intermediate database;

reconciling records of the intermediate database against corresponding records in the asset management database;

writing location codes, associated with assets, to the asset management database without the identifying indicia; and

identifying assets not found during the physical inventory in the asset management database by identifying location codes having the identifying indicia.

35. (Previously presented) The method as defined in claim 34 wherein placing identifying indicia on each location code in the asset management database further comprises appending a code to the end of each location code.

36. (Cancelled).

37. (Previously presented) The method as defined in claim 34 wherein taking the physical inventory using a portable bar code scanning device that saves physical inventory data in a data file within the portable bar code scanning device further comprises, at a plurality of locations:

scanning a location code that uniquely identifies the location; and

scanning at least one asset code of an asset at the location.

38. (Previously presented) The method as defined in claim 34 wherein transferring the data file to a web server further comprises:

coupling the portable bar code scanning device to an internet connection; and

transferring the data file to the web server using an FTP program.

39. (Previously presented) The method as defined in claim 34 wherein reconciling records of the intermediate database against corresponding records in the asset management database further comprises:

making a copy of the asset management database residing on the web server;

reconciling records in the intermediate database against corresponding records in the copy of the asset management database.

IX. EVIDENCE APPENDIX

None.

X. RELATED PROCEEDINGS APPENDIX

None.